

creating change in Devon



Catalyst

# Bovey Tracey Community Centre Design - Community Feedback Report

August 2017

Dawn Eckhart

Telephone: 01392 248919 x7170 Email:

dawn@devoncommunities.org.uk

[www.devoncommunities.org.uk](http://www.devoncommunities.org.uk)

Catalyst, Devon Communities Together,  
First Floor, 3&4 Cranmere Court, Lustleigh Close Matford  
Business Park, Exeter. EX2 8PW

Devon Communities Together is the operating name for Community Council of Devon, a

registered charity (no. 1074047), company registered in England and Wales (no.3694095) registered office as above. VAT registered (no. 942 0496 27).



## Contents

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Introduction .....   | 1 |
| Catalyst and Devon Communities Together .....   | 1 |
| Methodology .....   | 1 |
| 2. Questionnaire responses .....  | 4 |
| Question 1 asked participants if on the whole they broadly support the proposals for the Centre Design as presented in the exhibition .....                       | 4 |
| Question 2 asked participants to submit explanatory comments if they think that something is wrong with, or has been missed out from the exhibition proposal..... | 5 |
| Re: The 45% of participants that stated that on the whole they support the proposals as presented in the exhibition:.....   | 5 |
| Re: The 27% of participants that stated that they agree with only some elements of the proposals as presented .....   | 6 |
| Re: The 28% of participants who stated that they do not support the proposals as presented .....  | 8 |

**THIS DOCUMENT IS AVAILABLE IN LARGE PRINT  
FORMAT UPON REQUEST.**

**PLEASE PHONE 01392 248919 TO REQUEST A  
COPY.**



## 1. Introduction

Bovey Tracey Town Council, Devon County Council, Libraries Unlimited, the Information Centre Trust, and Teignbridge District Council are working in partnership to create a new Community Centre on the site of the Old Thatched Inn at the southern entry to the town.

To help inform the development plans for the new Centre a process of community consultation and stakeholder engagement was commissioned from Devon Communities Together during the spring and summer of 2016. The community needs, aspirations and ideas expressed in this engagement process were incorporated into a Design Brief which was used to invite expressions of interest from local architectural practices. As a result of this process the architectural firm Peregrine Mears Architects Ltd were appointed in spring 2017. The architects have been working with the Centre Steering Group and statutory agencies to develop initial design proposals for the building. These initial design proposals were presented for public review and comment at an exhibition in Bovey Tracey Library for a two week period at the end of July 2017. The aims of inviting this public feedback was twofold: Firstly, to show the public how their input during the consultation and engagement process has helped to shape the building design, and secondly to help the Town Council, the Centre Steering Group and the architects to ensure that the final plans for the Centre have the support of and reflect the views from the community as far as practicable prior to submitting the proposals for full planning permission in the autumn of 2017. This report presents the feedback received from members of the public during the Design exhibition.

### **Catalyst and Devon Communities Together**

Catalyst is the in-house consultancy service provided by Devon Communities Together (DCT).<sup>1</sup> Catalyst has been supporting the Bovey Tracey Centre Steering Group throughout the development process and was given the remit of helping to plan, facilitate and report on the public exhibition and the feedback received.

### **Methodology**

The exhibition composed by the architects consisted of a set of large canvasses setting out: the technical requirements and constraints of the site, the community and stakeholder requirements, aerial plans, side elevation plans and artist's impressions of how the internal space and external features could look. They also provided a 3D model of the proposed building. To accompany the exhibition short questionnaire forms were provided for members of the public to fill in and drop in a post box beside the exhibition. The exhibition canvasses and feedback forms were also provided on line via the Town Council's website and Facebook page. Posters were distributed around the town and on-line to promote the exhibition, along with an article in the Town Council's community newsletter "Quality Update" (distributed to 3,000 household) and a press release.

The exhibition was presented in the Library from Thursday the 27<sup>th</sup> July to Thursday the 10<sup>th</sup> of August. Initial sessions were staffed by members of the Steering Group and the architects team to aid discussion and answer queries. This proved to be very popular and helpers were engaged in constant dialogue throughout the "staffed" session.

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.devoncommunities.org.uk](http://www.devoncommunities.org.uk)

## **Public Exhibition - Bovey Tracey Community Centre – Design Stage**

Bovey Tracey Town Council is inviting local residents to view and comment on initial plans of its vision for the new Community Centre

**Exhibitions at Bovey Tracey Library:**  
**Thursday 27th July from 12 noon to 7.00 pm**  
**Saturday 29th July from 10.00 am – 12 noon**  
**Tuesday 1st August from 4.00 pm – 6.00 pm**



**Contact: Mark Wells, Town Clerk (01626 834217) or  
info@boveytracey.gov.uk for further information**

Copy of poster to promote the exhibition which was distributed around the town – when posted on the Town Facebook page it received 306 Likes.



## Public Engagement for Bovey Tracey Community Centre

A week-long public exhibition will take place at Bovey Tracey Library from 27th July through to 5th August 2017 to enable residents to comment on the initial design plans for the new Community Centre being built on the Old Thatched Inn site. Your comments will help to shape the future design and layout of the centre which includes the Library, Information Centre, Public Toilets, Town Council Offices and a multi functioning community meeting space. Plans will be on display at the Library from 12 noon on 27th July and will be available to view during library opening hours.

If, however you wish to speak with a member of the Community Centre Steering group, there will be three separate sessions where group representatives and/or the appointed architects will be on-hand to answer questions. These sessions are scheduled to take place on:

- Thursday 27th July from 12noon to 7.00pm
- Saturday 29th July from 10.00am – 12noon
- Tuesday 1st August from 4.00pm to 6.00pm



We want to ensure that the community voice is heard and build a centre that people will want to use. We hope that a multi-use community centre will be able to provide a wide range of services and public facilities all under one roof.



A Bovey Tracey Town Council partnership project, working with Bovey Tracey Information Centre, Teignbridge District Council and Libraries Unlimited

# See how we're getting on with our Community Centre

at [www.facebook.com/BoveyTraceyCommunityHub/](http://www.facebook.com/BoveyTraceyCommunityHub/)

or visit [www.boveytracey.gov.uk/Community-Centre-Building/Town-Council/](http://www.boveytracey.gov.uk/Community-Centre-Building/Town-Council/)

Copy of Quality Update newsletter distributed to 3000 homes in the parish

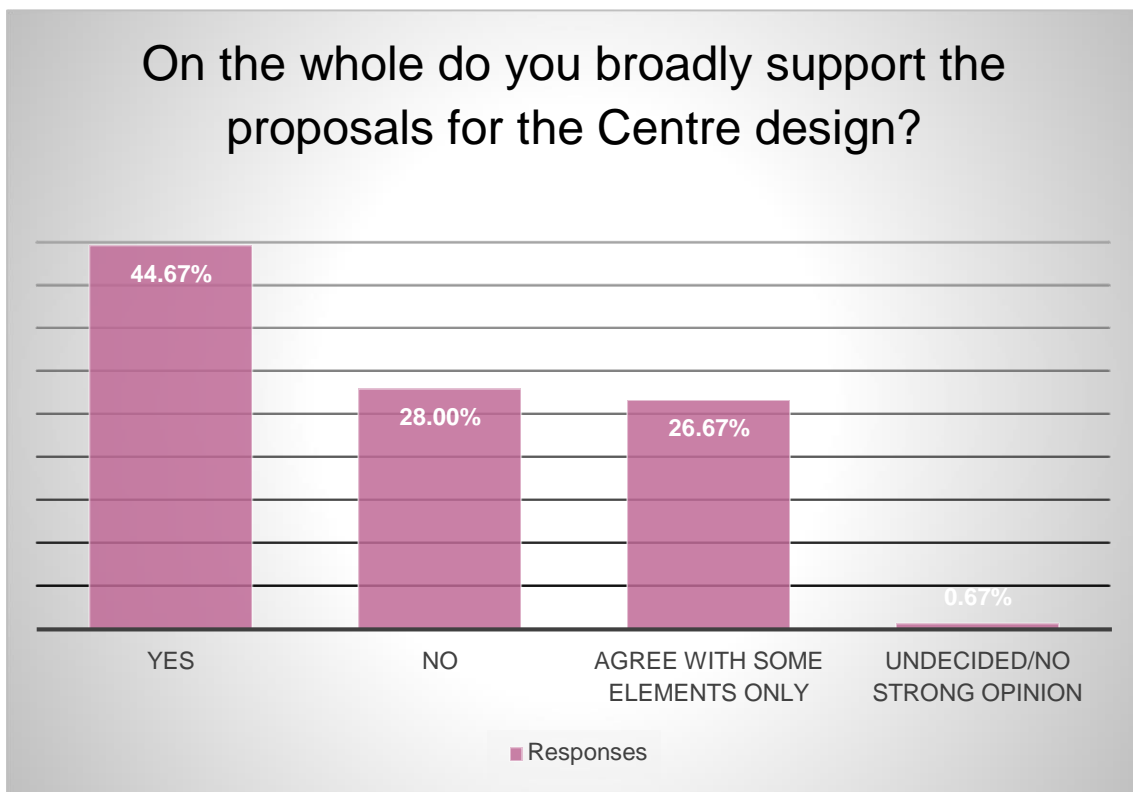
## 2. Questionnaire responses

The exhibition was available to view on a drop-in basis with some people attending for the specific purpose of viewing the exhibition and others who were using the library and took the opportunity of viewing it whilst there. Hence it was difficult to keep account of the exact number of people who viewed the exhibition, but we estimate that around 200 people participated.

The on-line copy of the exhibition was also visited by 96 people according to Google Analytics. The invitation to the exhibition which was posted on the Town Council’s Facebook page received 306 Likes.

A total of 145 feedback forms were completed at the library and a further 5 submitted on line.

**Question 1 asked participants if on the whole they broadly support the proposals for the Centre Design as presented in the exhibition.**



A total of 150 participants answered this question, of which 44% (67 individuals) stated that on the whole they broadly support the proposals presented. A further 27% (40 people) stated that they agree with some aspects only, and 28% (42 people) stated that they do not support the current design proposals. Only one participants indicated that they were undecided or had no strong opinion.

## **Question 2 asked participants to submit explanatory comments if they think that something is wrong with, or has been missed out from the exhibition proposal**

### **Re: The 45% of participants that stated that on the whole they support the proposals as presented in the exhibition:**

80% of them (54 individuals) went on to provide comments to elaborate on their position. The common themes that can be identified from the comments received are described in order of frequency below:

- ❖ At least 18 commentators expressed concerns about the materials and style of the front elevation of the building. The main objection was for the use of red bricks rather than more natural cladding suggestions including: natural stone, coloured rendering, wood cladding and more feature windows. Several people stated that the style is too industrial and incongruous in this area of the town. (This aspect of the feedback was replicated and elaborated on in the section below).
- ❖ At least 15 commentators expressed strong approval for the overall look of the building design with particular reference to its' "contemporary" style, "zig-zag" roof and ceramic cladding.
- ❖ At least 15 comments referred to the need to make the building as eco-friendly as possible with suggestions including installation of PV, rain-water collection and charge-points for electric cars in the car-park.
- ❖ Several people expressed concerns about the internal lay-out of spaces in particular the apparent need to move a lot of furniture and potential conflicts between different user groups in the same space.
- ❖ Several people raised concerns about the kitchen provision; the fact that it appears to be too small to be equipped for external caterers to use and provide for large functions and also, that it needs a serving hatch into the main events space. This was recognised as a particularly important issue in terms of attracting future income streams.
- ❖ Concerns were raised about the roof and windows: The latter being a lack of windows particularly in the front elevation for external aesthetics. Comments on the roof included: "looks expensive", "gullies will be difficult to maintain" and "where will the flag pole go"
- ❖ A few people highlighted the importance of good storage provision to accommodate as many user groups from the community as possible and allow flexibility of function. A couple of people suggested that this would be a better use of space than the courtyard proposal.



- ❖ Other commentators focussed on specific internal features needed to make the multipurpose function work well, including: acoustics and lighting rigging infrastructure for live performances; flooring suitable for dancing and ballet/keep fit classes; and adequate staffing for the visitor information zone, the checking of toilets and managing the external bookings.
- ❖ Several commentators offered quite technical and detailed design ideas all of which will be included in the Appendix document to this report.

Some typical quotes from these local residents:

*"Good to see something Tangible happening!"*

*"Where are the solar panels and/or other energy efficiency measures? Surely this is an invest-to-save measure for such a building and sends a positive message to the community."*

*"People who work from home and want to use the space do so in order to socialise a bit/ meet other people rather than continue working alone, so single office spaces, will not be attractive - better to have office with multiple desks."*

*"Best wishes to having full planning permission soon, then onwards to having this good facility ASAP!"*

*"I think this has been very well thought through and will be great for our town. Thank you to our councillors, officers and consultants for putting such effort into this project"*

**Re: The 27% of participants that stated that they agree with only some elements of the proposals as presented.**

100% of them (40 individuals) provided explanatory comments as to their position. The common themes that can be identified from the comments received are described in order of frequency below:

- ❖ At least 74% of comments expressed concerns about the style and materials used for the front elevation (Station Rd façade) of the building. Some of these comments were very strongly worded - probably illustrative of the depth of concern and dislike felt - using terms such as: stark, hideous, ugly, horrific and a blot on the landscape. The proposal was frequently referred to as being factory or warehouse like in style and incongruous with the historic and domestic vernacular of its immediate surroundings (references to the Craft Guild and the GP surgery as good examples to follow) and to the connection with Dartmoor and rural hinterland. Most people referred to the "red brick" finish as being the main issue they are unhappy with. Several comments referred to the "potteries" as not being a suitable historic

reference to emulate for this specific location and function. By way of improvements several people suggested the use of more “natural” materials and colours and to stone cladding or rendering as being more appropriate. A couple of people suggested that use of different coloured bricks and patterning could help improve the visual impact.

- ❖ Over 50% of comments referred to the internal lay-out and functionality in a positive light. A couple of people did question whether a mezzanine or 2<sup>nd</sup> floor could be added to ease the pressure on internal accommodation.
- ❖ Several people expressed concerns about the roof and window proposals. In terms of the former, concerns referred to the flat roof sections and valleys of the front roof and the difficulties/costs of maintenance of such. A few comments suggested the need for more glass and larger windows particularly on the front elevation.
- ❖ Several people raised the issue and importance of how eco-friendly the building will be with common suggestions being: the use of solar and ground-source energy production; use of carbon-neutral materials; rain water collection for flushing and greening the outside.
- ❖ Disabled access in particular in relation to the toilets was raised by a few participants. Commentators referred to the importance of good practice in relation to meeting the needs of people with physical, sensory and mental health conditions. A lot of constructive suggestions were offered including: the use of colour contrasts for key internal features, providing consistent lighting without glare and internal signage and way-marking. Several people suggested that more than one toilet should be fully accessible and open “out of hours” from the car-park.

Some typical quotes from these local residents:

*“Good interior use of space but why not have 2 storeys?”*

*“The building should reflect Dartmoor in some way i.e. some polished granite for outside seating.”*

*“Parking for pushchairs, disability scooters - is this possible?”*

*“What is wrong with using softer natural materials as has been done with the architects’ example at RHS Rosemoor”*

*“ No steps should be used internally and every entrance/exit should have sloped access to the outside”*

## Re: The 28% of participants who stated that they do not support the proposals as presented

100% of them (42 individuals) provided explanatory comments as to their position. The common themes that can be identified from their comments received are described in order of frequency below:

- ❖ All but one commentator referred to their dislike of the external design: Their comments very much replicated those reported above. Their criticisms were usually with regard to the front elevation (Station Rd façade) and their opinion that the red brick cladding is not in keeping with the locality and the style and dimensions of the frontage present an industrial / warehouse visual impression.
- ❖ A few of these commentators do compliment the internal design but suggest that it would be a lost opportunity not to include a 2<sup>nd</sup> floor to better accommodate all the community needs.
- ❖ Other comments reflected those already listed above – particularly the need for more out of hours' toilet access and the need to incorporate renewable energy sources now rather than in retrospect (costlier)

Typical quotes from these local residents:

"Toilets: Only one toilet available out of hours - this is inadequate in a tourist town"

"There will be many demands for space but much of this is fresh air."

"I hate to say this, but even though I was in favour of something modern, artistic and original, on looking at what is proposed I find it absolutely appalling."

The single participant who stated that they were undecided or had no strong opinion as to whether they support the proposals focussed on the issue of what name to give the building (suggested the Bovey Hub) so that it would not be confused with the larger complex planned for the Molay Littry Way site. They also suggested that the cinema proposed for the new King of Prussia project would be better accommodated in this Hub to encourage its use by young residents.

Many participants submitted quite in-depth ideas and technical suggestions, all of which will be provided to the Steering Group as a separate Appendix document for their reference and clarification.